



# CURRENT NEWS

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NEW YORK TIMES

7 October 1983 Pg. 11

## SYRIA IS REPORTED AWAITING MISSILE

U.S. Aide Says Moscow Plans  
to Put Mobile Weapon in  
Mideast for First Time

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN

The Soviet Union has begun making preparations to deploy a mobile missile in Syria that could reach targets in Lebanon, Israel and the American Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, an official traveling with Secretary of State George P. Shultz said last night.

The official, speaking in New York, said American intelligence had detected signs that the Soviet Union is preparing to send the missile, known as the SS-21, to Syria for the first time. The missile, which can carry nuclear warheads or high explosives, has never been deployed outside the Warsaw Pact nations.

The official said, however, that there was no indication the Soviet Union would introduce nuclear weapons into Syria but rather would use conventional explosives on the missile, which has a range of around 75 miles.

According to a Pentagon report cited SYRIA...Pg. 4

### GENERAL NEWS SUMMARY

FROM THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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### World-Wide

A CAR BOMB KILLED a pro-Israeli Muslim leader in southern Lebanon.

Muhammad Wahbe, head of an Israeli-supported militia, was killed in Adloun, 30 miles south of Beirut. Separately, U.S. diplomats think they are near breakthroughs to solidify the cease-fire in Lebanon and start talks on political reconstruction. Talks are under way with Lebanese factions to arrange international observers to police the Sept. 26 cease-fire. (Story on Page 2)

Moscow apparently is preparing to send a surface-to-surface missile to Syria that would represent a new threat to Israel, U.S. intelligence sources

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## U.S. EXPERTS SAY SOVIET DIDN'T SEE JET WAS CIVILIAN

By DAVID SHRIBMAN

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES

1. WASHINGTON, Oct. 6—Five weeks after a Soviet fighter shot down a South Korean airliner, United States intelligence experts say they have reviewed all available evidence and found no indication that Soviet air defense personnel knew it was a commercial plane before the attack.

2. The informants say most American intelligence specialists are now confident, as a result of the review, that the SU-26 fighter that fired the rockets at the 747 on Sept. 1 was below and behind the airliner, rather than parallel to it, as high-level officials in Washington at first believed.

3. The experts said in interviews this week that, given the difficulty of identifying a plane from below, they believed the Soviet pilot probably did not know what kind of plane he was shooting down in Soviet airspace.

4. Many details remain unknown. But intelligence experts, using transcripts of Soviet radio transmissions, radar impulses and additional intelligence data that American and Japanese officials refuse to discuss publicly, have placed together a broad picture of what happened on the night of Aug. 31 and Sept. 1 when the South Korean airliner flew over the Soviet Union's Kamchatka Peninsula and Sakhalin Island.

5. The informants said the experts had reached general agreement that the Soviet Air Defense Force had displayed a poor capacity to intercept aircraft in Soviet airspace, to distinguish between commercial and military aircraft and to identify a plane before shooting it down.

6. This information, which was processed by intelligence experts and reportedly sent to the White House and the State Department about two weeks after the attack, appears to cast a somewhat different light on the incident.

7. A White House spokesman, quoted

U.S. EXPERTS

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

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## Shipyard decision reviewed

Navy may revoke  
Independence job

By Robert R. Frump

Philadelphia Staff Writer

The decision to overhaul the aircraft carrier Independence at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard is under review because of the "serious problems" in the work performed here earlier on the Saratoga, Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman said yesterday.

The quality of work being done now on the carrier Forrestal will determine whether the Philadelphia yard and its 10,000 workers receive the \$400 million contract to overhaul the Independence in 1985, Lehman said.

"I would say very strongly to everyone at the Philadelphia Navy Yard that they must work hard to see that this problem does not occur again," Lehman said. "The role of every worker will make up the sum total upon which the yard is judged."

After the Saratoga's two-year, \$550 million overhaul at the Philadelphia yard, the ship developed leaks in its steam system that forced it into port.

At a news conference at Penn's Landing aboard the battleship Olympia, the Navy secretary discussed for the first time in public the Navy's opinion of the Philadelphia yard's record and the region's chances of retaining future carrier contracts. At stake is not only the contract for the Independence but contracts for the Kitty Hawk class of carriers. The Kitty Hawk contracts could keep the yard at full employment through the end of this century.

In addition to putting Philadelphia on notice, Lehman said Navy officials in Washington should share some of the blame for the Saratoga's

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## U.S. EXPERTS...Continued

turned about new intelligence surrounding the plane incident, said today that the Administration would have no comment on matters involving the gathering or distribution of intelligence.

8. "We don't talk about intelligence or intelligence reporting," Les Janka, deputy White House press secretary said.

9. In the days right after the downing, Reagan Administration officials denounced it as an example of a deliberate breach of human rights. The original assumption in Washington was that the Soviet pilots had closely examined the 747 and shot it down when it seemed to be leaving Soviet airspace, even though they should have known it was a civilian plane.

10. After studying the new information, Administration officials still insist that the Soviet Union should have established the identity of its target before shooting it down.

11. Many of the analysts, who have examined the tapes and electronic reconnaissance information that has been accumulating since the downing, are now said to believe, however, that the Soviet air defense command was operating on the assumption that the SU-15 was tracking a smaller RC-135 Air Force reconnaissance plane, and not an airliner.

12. The informants said that the important conclusion, by most American intelligence experts, that the SU-15 was below, and not parallel to, the South Korean 747 was not reached until the week of Sept. 12.

13. This was a week after President Reagan said in a television address that the attack was a "crime against humanity" and added:

14. "The 747 has a unique and distinctive silhouette. There is no way a pilot could mistake this for anything other than a civilian airliner."

## Soviet Radio Conversations

15. Despite the conclusion by most American experts, some intelligence officials continued to maintain that the Soviet pilot must have seen that his target was a commercial jet. They cited Soviet radio conversations indicating that the pilot had moved in front of the jetliner.

16. In any event, policy makers still insist that the Soviet defenders should have known the identity of the plane even if they did not.

17. "You end up with the idea that it was their business to know, but that they didn't," said an Administration official, who spoke on the condition that he not be identified.

18. As a result of the review of evidence, intelligence experts said they believed that the decision to shoot down the 747 was all but made once Soviet radar operators identified the jetliner as a RC-135 when it first entered Soviet airspace two hours before it was shot down.

## 'Unidentified,' Then 'Intruder'

19. A radar operator at an early part of the incident informed the air defense command in Kamchatka that he had sighted an RC-135. Another radar operator later said he had sighted an "unidentified" plane. Still later, the plane was described as an "intruder."

20. But by the time the 747, continuing its off-course flight from Anchorage to Seoul, flew over the Soviet island of Sakhalin, anti-aircraft missile batteries were put on alert to stop what was described as an "RC-125."

21. The informants said they believed that the Soviet Air Defense Force did not use surface-to-air missiles against the jetliner because the plane was out of the missiles' range.

22. The officials said they believed that the initial identification of the jetliner as a military reconnaissance aircraft became fixed in the minds of Soviet air defense officials and was strengthened after Soviet interceptors were unable to locate the plane for two hours.

## Shortcomings Are Suggested

23. The reason, they said, was that Soviet ground controllers were encountering difficulty in directing the Soviet planes on courses that would intercept that of the South Korean airliner. One problem was timing the takeoff of the interceptors, which are limited in range by their fuel, and then directing them on courses that would lead them to a target flying more than 300 miles an hour at an altitude of seven miles.

24. The experts said the Soviet inability to solve this problem, at least when the airliner was passing over Kamchatka, suggested important shortcomings.

25. Intelligence assembled by American experts indicates, they said, that a Soviet interceptor aircraft never came closer than 20 miles to the Korean Air Lines 747 as it flew over Kamchatka.

26. Some American officials say they believe that the misidentification of the airliner by personnel on the ground may explain why the Soviet pilots did not, in the last minutes of the jetliner's flight, try to make a careful airborne identification of the aircraft, which has a distinctive hump above the cockpit.

## 'Mindset About Killing Plane'

27. "The Soviets had a mindset about killing the plane," an American official said. "I got the impression that the guy was thinking only about shooting the plane, with very little sense of anything else."

28. This information, indicating that the Soviet defenders either thought they were shooting down an RC-135 or an unidentified plane, became known to American intelligence in the days after the downing as intercepted radio and radar signals were given closer scrutiny.

29. But the officials said it was not known to Administration officials on the day of the incident, when, for example, Secretary of State George P. Shultz said the United States could "see no excuse whatsoever for this appalling act."

30. An aide to Mr. Shultz said today that the Secretary would have made similar remarks even if he had known all of the

later findings. "It is just as abhorrent to shoot down an unarmed reconnaissance plane," the aide said.

## New Details Gathered

31. The Administration presented its case to the world in the first week after the incident, with a series of statements by Mr. Shultz, the televised speech by President Reagan and a speech by James J. Kirkpatrick, the chief American delegate to the United Nations. Since then, many new, important details have been gathered and analyzed, but the State Department and the White House have been reluctant to speak publicly about them.

32. A White House spokesman declined to specify when President Reagan became aware of the new intelligence.

33. "We don't talk about intelligence or intelligence reporting," the spokesman said. "There's a feeling here that far too much intelligence has already dribbled out as a result of all this."

34. The only major factual addition the Administration has made since the first week was a revision in the transcript of the Soviet pilots' conversations to include the fact that the SU-15 fired warning shots at the airliner.

## Inquiry by U.N. Agency

35. The Administration's reticence, officials said, is in part a result of an effort not to compromise American intelligence-gathering activities and of a desire not to overshadow an investigation being undertaken by the International Civil Aviation Organization, a United Nations agency.

36. Intelligence experts said the majority view among their colleagues was that the Soviet fighter approached the jetliner from below and that this would have obscured the pilot's image of the front of the jetliner. They said they believed that, since his image of the jetliner was shortened, he saw simply a four-engine aircraft.

37. "Whatever confusion there was," an Administration spokesman said, "there is a very strong view that because of the flight pattern, which is totally anomalous for an RC-125, and because they did change the designation, the Soviets had sufficient reason to doubt that this was an intelligence plane."

38. The United States has confirmed that an RC-125, one of a small fleet of surveillance planes that regularly monitor Soviet missile tests and air-defense activities, was in the general area on Sept. 1, when the airliner was shot down, and actually crossed the path that the South Korean airliner followed.

## A Reconnaissance Program

39. Defense Department officials said the RC-125 was part of a reconnaissance program known as the Cobra Dane Space-track Radar System, with a mission of monitoring Soviet missile tests off the Kamchatka Peninsula from international airspace.

40. By the time the RC-125 crossed the path taken by the airliner, according to

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## SYRIA...Continued

by The Associated Press, the SS-21 is designed to be carried on a six wheeled transporter that doubles as a launcher. The report said the Soviet Union produced it to replace a less-accurate surface-to-surface Warsaw Pact missile known as the Frog 7.

Mr. Shultz's aide said the United States would be "gravely concerned" if the Soviet Union sent any nuclear weapons into the Middle East, even under the control of Soviet troops. He said that although there was no indication Moscow was planning to deploy nuclear warheads in that region, the addition of another advanced weapons system in Syria was likely to increase tensions.

The Syrians, who have backed the anti-Government forces in Lebanon, indicated concern last month over the shelling of their lines in Lebanon by United States Navy warships that are protecting the marines in Lebanon and the Lebanese Government troops.

An American official said the report suggested the Russians were seeking to demonstrate their reliability as an ally of Syria, which suffered heavily losses to Israel last year and which has to consider the possibility of a new Syrian-Israeli conflict over Lebanon as a possibility, given the proximity of each side's forces to the other in Lebanon.

Since the beginning of the year, the Soviet Union has deployed new, long-range antiaircraft missiles in Syria and replaced the fighter planes and tanks that Syria lost in combat against Israel in Lebanon last year.

## Consistently on Syria's Side

The Soviet Union has also supported Syria in its refusal to withdraw its troops from Lebanon and has consistently taken Syria's side in the dispute over the future of Lebanon.

Two Syrians, with Soviet backing, have sought to undermine the Lebanese Government of President Amin Gemayel and have rejected the idea of United Nations observers to supervise the truce in Lebanon.

Earlier yesterday, however, a senior State Department official said there had been movement toward resolving the question of finding neutral observers to police the cease-fire in Lebanon.

In a briefing for reporters, the official also expressed satisfaction at the progress he said was being made toward convening a meeting of the leaders of the different political factions in Lebanon for establishing a national unity government under Mr. Gemayel.

"All these things are working along," he said, "so we're pleased about that."

## Shultz Meets on Mideast

The briefing took place yesterday after Mr. Shultz had met at the United Nations Plaza Hotel with the Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Saud al Faisal, and with Foreign Minister Marwan al-Khassem of Jordan to discuss the Middle East. They are in New York for the fall session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Last week, Mr. Shultz failed to persuade the Syrians to agree to a United

## U.S. EXPERTS...Continued

American officials, the two planes were separated by almost 300 miles. The United States maintains that only one KC-135 was in the area, that it flew no closer than 50 miles from the Soviet coastline, that it never passed closer than 75 nautical miles from the airliner and that it was on the ground at its base in Alaska when the 747 was shot down.

41. The United States based its contention that the two planes did not come any closer than 75 nautical miles from each other by monitoring the signals produced by Soviet radar, according to American officials. At a news conference early last month, Marshal Nikolai V. Ogarkov, chief of the Soviet General Staff, said the two aircraft "rendezvoused" and for about 10 minutes were flying "side by side."

42. American officials have disputed Marshal Ogarkov's version of the incident, arguing that the rendezvous theory is not supported by the intelligence data they have assembled.

43. The Soviet Union has repeatedly charged that its air defenses believed that the 747 was on a reconnaissance mission.

Nations truce observer team, and the mood within the American party then was in sharp contradiction to the hopeful remarks expressed yesterday. The senior official declined persistent requests to provide details on the composition of the observers.

The cease-fire agreement called for neutral observers to police the truce, and the United States and other members of the Western forces in Lebanon originally suggested that the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, already in the Middle East, handle the observation work.

There have been reports from the Middle East that one approach under discussion, given Syria's objections to United Nations participation, is for forces already in Lebanon as part of another United Nations peacekeeping force be used to watch the cease-fire. Another possibility has been the introduction of individual troops from several neutral nations.

A Western official at the United Nations who is usually informed on such activities said he did not know what "movement" the senior American official was talking about. He said the only reports he had seen suggested a deadlock, but added, "Perhaps he knows something we don't know."

In another matter, the senior State Department official said there had been intelligence information about a buildup of Cuban troops in Angola. Other officials said 25,000 Cubans were now estimated to be in Angola, an increase from the 19,000 to 20,000 of a few months ago.

The increase, the official said, was a result of the increased military pressure on the Angolan Government from the rebels in the south, known by the acronym Unita, who have reported major gains in recent months.

## COST CUTTERS...Continued

Lincoln. The law provided that private citizens could recover a large part of the damages if a suit alleging the government was defrauded was successful.

■ Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger has ordered a crackdown on the overcharges, saying the Pentagon would refuse to pay unjustified prices, and top Defense Department officials have told Pentagon purchasing agents give prices a close perusal.

■ The Air Force and Navy have recently paid bonuses of up to \$1,100 to employees who questioned and caught unfair prices, officials said. They advocated more bonuses.

## NEWS SUMMARY...Continued

said.

The leaders of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Venezuela, Honduras and Costa Rica agreed to principles for peace in the region, Mexico said. They include an end to outside military intervention. Separately, a plane that crashed last month during a bombing raid in Nicaragua reportedly was provided to anti-Sandinista rebels by the CIA.

The U.S. formally offered a plan for reducing strategic warheads at the fifth round of year-old strategic arms reduction talks in Geneva, Switzerland. But Moscow promptly dismissed the proposal as an attempt to continue the arms race.

India took direct control of Punjab state after members of the militant Sikh sect allegedly killed six Hindu passengers on a bus and two officials on a train. Hindu leaders called a statewide strike for today.

Striking Filipino workers at U.S. bases agreed to end a four-day-old wage walkout. Meanwhile, thousands of anti-government protesters marched through Manila, vowing to fight President Marcos with bigger demonstrations until he is driven from office.

Lech Walesa said he's afraid to leave Poland to accept the Nobel Peace Prize in Norway Dec. 10. The founder of the outlawed Solidarity union said he would outline a new strategy for the movement about Dec. 16, the anniversary of a clash between workers and authorities in Gdansk.

A coup attempt in Niger failed, national radio said. President Seyni Kountche was on his way back to the African country after attending a conference in France. Diplomats were concerned that neighboring Libya might be trying to replace Kountche with someone more sympathetic to Libya's Col. Qadhafi. (Story on Page 37)